

Message Text

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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC)-US STATEMENT ON SELF-
DETERMINATION

1. TEXT FOLLOWING OF STATEMENT GIVEN BY US REP GARMENT ON
FEB 9. BEGIN TEXT.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

THE COURSE OF THIS DEBATE HAS CONVINCED THE UNITED
STATES OF THE NEED TO RESTATE WHAT THE PRINCIPLE OF NATIONAL
SELF-DETERMINATION MEANT WHEN FIRST DECLARED BY WOODROW
WILSON SIXTY YEARS AGO. WHILE WE REALIZE, AS WAS POINTED
OUT BY PROFESSOR ERMACORA OF AUSTRIA, THAT THE LANGUAGE
EMPLOYED IN THE UNITED NATIONS IS THE PRODUCT OF THIRTY
YEARS OF COMPROMISE, WE REJECT THE NOTION THAT THESE COM-
PROMISES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DISTORT BY INSINUATION THE
FUNDEMENTAL MEANING OF THE CONCEPTS UNDER DISCUSSION IN THE
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PREVENT
ONCE-EVIDENT TRUTHS FROM DETERIORATING INTO FALSEHOODS,
BUT AT LEAST THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN WITHOUT OUR PROTEST.

IN THIS DEBATE WE HAVE HEARD A PARTICULARLY SLANDEROUS
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ALLEGATION THAT THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION HAS

BEEN PREVENTING THE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN ANGOLA. THIS CHARGE WE REJECT ABSOLUTELY. IT IS SO LACKING IN ANY FACTUAL FOUNDATION THAT IS REPE- TITION IN THIS BODY MAKES US SUSPICIOUS THAT ITS INTENTION WAS MORE THAN THE STRAIGHTFORWARD MALICIOUS SLANDER THAT IT APPEARED TO BE ON ITS FACE. CERTAINLY IT IS A STALE AND SHOPWORN TACTIC AT THE UNITED NATIONS TO RELY ON A SURROGATE TO CHARGE OTHER GOVERNMENTS WITH INTERFERING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF A STATE IN ORDER TO COVER UP ONE'S OWN ACTIVITIES. THERE ARE INDEED OUTSIDE POWERS ATTEMPTING TO PREVENT THE ANGOLAN PEOPLE FROM THE FREE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, BUT THESE OUTSIDE POWERS ARE NOT MEM- BERS OF NATO.

THERE IS NOT ONE PERSON IN THIS ROOM UNAWARE THAT THOUSANDS OF FOREIGN TROOPS ARE TODAY IN ANGOLA FIGHTING TO IMPOSE THEIR VIEW OF WHO SHOULD REPRESENT THE ANGOLAN PEOPLE. THERE IS NOT ONE PERSON IN THIS ROOM WHO DOES NOT KNOW THAT THESE TROOPS ARE MEMBERS OF NON-NATO ARMIES.

WE REJECT THESE ALLEGATIONS BECAUSE THEY ARE UNTRUE, AND BECAUSE THEY SERVE ONLY THE INTEREST OF THOSE WHO SEEK TO IMPOSE THEIR OWN DESIGNS ON THE ANGOLAN PEOPLE. TO THE EXTENT THIS COMMISSION ACQUIESCES IN THESE CHARGES, IT FORSTERS THE POLITICAL CHAOS THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE WORST ENEMY OF SELF-DETERMINATION.

TO OPPOSE SUCH CHAOS IN ANGOLA IS NOT TO OPPOSE SELF- DETERMINATION; IT IS TO SUPPORT IT. FOR WHAT CHAOS BREEDS IS EMPIRE, THE SPECIAL COMAIN OF OUTSIDERS DRAWN TO THE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH CHAOS CREATES.

WHAT WE UNDERSTAND BY NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION MAY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH A VARIETY OF POLITICAL INSTRUMENTAL- ITIES, BUT THE ONE WAY IT CANNOT BE ACHIEVED IS THROUGH THE IMPOSITION OF A LEADERSHIP UPON A PEOPLE BY OUTSIDE FORCES. WE SHOULD SAY, NOT WITHOUT HOPE OF BEING HEEDDED, THAT SELF- DETERMINATION IS A DEMOCRATIC IDEA. IT IS AN IDEA BASED ON LAW, ON PROCEDURE, AND MOST OF ALL ON CONSENT.

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THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION IS THE RIGHT OF PEOPLE TO DECIDE FREELY TO WHICH GOVERNMENT THEY WILL PLEDGE THEIR ALLEGIANCE, WHAT FORM THAT GOVERNMENT SHALL TAKE, AND WHO SHALL LEAD THAT GOVERNMENT. IT APPLIES IN EVERY REGION OF THE WORLD. IT IS AN AMBULATORY RIGHT, WHICH IS TO SAY IT DOES NOT VANISH SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS EXCERCISED. THE SAD FACT IS THAT IN MANY PLACES SELF-DETERMINATION, ONCE EXCERCISED, LEADS TO ARGUMENTS THAT RATIONALE ITS EX-

TINCTION. BUT THE CONCEPT IS CLEAR: A NATION HAS THE RIGHT TO RENEW OR REVISE ITS POLITICAL CHARTER AS AN INTRINSIC PART OF THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT IS BEYOND ARGUMENT THAT DECISIONS IMPOSED BY THE FORCE OF OUTSIDERS OR A MINORITY FACTION WITHIN A COUNTRY ARE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE EXERCISE OF SELF-DETERMINATION. FOR THE UNITED STATES THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION CAN NEVER BE EXERCISED IN THE ABSENCE OF CONSENT, AN ELEMENT THAT HAVE BEEN CLEARLY LACKING IN ANGOLA BECAUSE OF THE MASSIVE INTERVENTION OF CUBAN TROOPS AND SOVIETS ARMS IN THE KIND OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSLY SELF-DETERMINED JUSTIFICATION ANNOUNCED BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA IN THIS CHAMBER THIS MORNING.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE REMARKS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA ON THIS SUBJECT CAN BE TESTED BY THE CREDIBILITY OF HIS REMARKS ON ANOTHER SUBJECT--EXTRANEIOUS TO OUR AGENDA--WHICH HE INTRODUCED THIS MORNING: THE SUBJECT OF PUERTO RICO. HIS REMARKS ON THE ALLEGED DENIAL OF SELF-DETERMINATION TO THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO WERE WHOLLY FALSE, AND RECOGNIZABLE AS SUCH BY ANY REASONABLE PERSON, EVEN ONE OF PARTISAN SENTIMENTS, WHO CAN READ AND COUNT.

THE HISTORICAL FACTS ARE SIMPLE AND HAVE BEEN FREQUENTLY STATED. THEY CAN BE BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED: THE 8TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACKNOWLEDGED PUERTO RICO'S SELF-GOVERNING STATUS IN 1953, A DECISION WHICH WAS REAFFIRMED IN 1971 BY THE 26TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH REJECTED AN ATTEMPT TO INSCRIBE AN ITEM ON PUERTO RICO ON ITS AGENDA. UNITED STATES POLICY WITH REGARD TO PUERTO RICO BASED ON OUR COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE OF PUERTO RICO'S RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO EXERCISED THAT RIGHT IN APPROVING UNCLASSIFIED

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COMMONWEALTH STATUS AND THEIR OWN CONSTITUTION IN 1952. THEY REAFFIRMED THAT CHOICE IN A STATUS REFERENDUM IN 1967, PARTICIPATED IN BY 60 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE, IN WHICH 50 PERCENT VOTED FOR COMMONWEALTH STATUS. 39 PERCENT VOTED FOR STATEHOOD AND LESS THAN 1 PERCENT VOTED FOR INDEPENDENCE. IN A SERIES OF PERIODIC GENERAL AND FREE ELECTIONS THEY HAVE MADE THEIR WILL KNOWN. NO MISREPRESENTATION TO THE CONTRARY CAN DISGUISE THE APPROVAL OF THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO ON THEIR SELF-GOVERNING STATUS

THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION WILL NOT LONG SURVIVE IF ITS IS REQUIRED TO CARRY THE BURDEN OF INTERVENTIONS SO DEVOID OF MERIT AS THE ONE PRESENTED THIS MORNING BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA. END TEXT
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